

## *Sue Myrick*

*1941–*

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE  
REPUBLICAN FROM NORTH CAROLINA

*1995–*



*Congressional Pictorial Directory*  
108th Congress

**SUE MYRICK, AN ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE AND FORMER MAYOR** of Charlotte, North Carolina, won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1994, during the “Republican Revolution.” One of the leaders of the large GOP freshman class in the 104th Congress (1995–1997), Representative Myrick acted as a liaison between the leadership and a core group of conservatives and earned a powerful position on the Rules Committee. A fiscal and social conservative throughout her career, Myrick fought a personal battle with breast cancer that led her to become a chief proponent of legislation to combat the disease.

Suellen Wilkins was born in Tiffin, Ohio, on August 1, 1941. She graduated from Port Clinton High School in Port Clinton, Ohio, in 1959 and attended Heidelberg College for one year. She married and raised two children and was later divorced. Employed in a variety of jobs, she was an executive secretary for the Alliance, Ohio, mayor’s office, an employee for the court of juvenile and domestic relations in Ohio, and a television personality in Harrisonburg, Virginia. In the early 1970s, she and her family relocated to Charlotte, where she switched careers, eventually running her own advertising companies. In 1977, she married William Edward “Ed” Myrick, who brought three children of his own to the marriage. Sue Myrick had no political ambitions before the early 1980s, when she and her husband had a dispute with the city council of Charlotte over a proposed property purchase. The experience convinced Myrick that government played a more immediate part in her life than she had previously believed.<sup>1</sup> In 1983, she won a seat on the city council as an at-large member, serving until 1985. She made an unsuccessful bid to become Charlotte’s mayor in 1985 but, two years later, defeated the incumbent to become the city’s first woman mayor. During her two terms as mayor from 1987 to 1991, Myrick made major transportation and infrastructure improvements to Charlotte, and enacted drug-and crime-fighting programs.

Myrick eventually turned her attention toward national office, making an unsuccessful bid for a U.S. Senate nomination in 1992. Two years later, when Republican Representative Alex McMillan announced his retirement from a North Carolina district seat covering a large part of Charlotte and Gastonia

in south-central North Carolina, Myrick entered the race to succeed him. Myrick prevailed in a five-way primary, and easily won the general election, with 65 percent of the vote. In her subsequent five re-election campaigns, Myrick boasted comfortable margins of 63 percent or more. In 2004, she was elected to the 109th Congress (2005–2007) with 70 percent of the vote.<sup>2</sup>

During her first term in the 104th Congress, Representative Myrick received assignments on three committees: Budget, Science, and Small Business.<sup>3</sup> She left those panels in the 105th Congress (1997–1999) to serve on the prestigious House Rules Committee, with oversight of all legislation headed for floor debate. Representative Myrick has chaired the Republican Study Committee, a group comprised of the chamber's most conservative Members. She also has worked as a member of the Republican Conference's Communications Working Group, drawing on her advertising experience to craft the GOP message.

From her seat on the Budget Committee and then on the Rules Committee, Congresswoman Myrick helped implement the "Contract with America," personally focusing on welfare reform. She also helped shape the 1997 budget which was the first balanced budget in nearly 30 years. Myrick still meets regularly with GOP leaders to discuss legislation and to express the resolve of fiscal conservatives.

Myrick's successful battle against breast cancer in the late 1990s reoriented her legislative focus toward initiatives that help fight the disease. She spearheaded through the House a measure to federally fund treatment for low-income women diagnosed with breast cancer or cervical cancer. She has also co-chaired the House Cancer Caucus since the 107th Congress (2001–2003).<sup>4</sup>

Representative Myrick has been attentive to her district's needs, particularly unemployment in sectors such as the state's ailing textile industry. Spurred by the disappearance of an 18-year-old college student from her district, Myrick focused on legislation to create a national clearinghouse for information on missing adults. Myrick's support of prayer in school and opposition to abortion reflects the conservative tilt of her district. She also has been a leading advocate in securing America's border and addressing North Carolina's immigration problems.

In the 109th Congress, Representative Myrick left her Rules Committee post to serve on the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee, where she focuses her time on issues such as cancer and brain disease.

#### FOR FURTHER READING

*Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*, "Sue Myrick,"  
<http://bioguide.congress.gov>

#### NOTES

- 1 Noella Kertes, "Rep. Sue Myrick," 28 December 2002, *CQ Weekly*: 53–54.
- 2 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://clerk.house.gov/members/electionInfo/index.html>.
- 3 Mildred Amer, *Women in the United States Congress: 1917–2004*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress (July 2004).
- 4 *Congressional Record*, House, 106th Cong., 2nd sess. (30 March 2000): 1624; *Politics in America*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2003): 761.